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ADVISORY SERVICES AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION
IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Question of assistance to Chad

Progress report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Introduction

1. In its decision 1999/102, entitled "Question of assistance to Chad", the Commission on Human Rights requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to submit a progress report at its fifty-sixth session on the establishment and implementation of a technical cooperation project based on the joint needs-assessment mission to Chad undertaken by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in October 1998.

2. In accordance with that decision, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and UNDP have drawn up a project document for technical cooperation with Chad in the fields of human rights and governance. This project document was signed by the Government of Chad and UNDP on 6 and 13 August 1999 respectively. It has also been approved and signed by the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

3. Once the above project document had been signed, the UNDP proceeded, in consultation with the Government of Chad and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, to recruit an international expert in charge of implementing the project in the field. This expert arrived in N'Djaména on 31 January 2000, so that the programme was able to start in February. It is expected to be completed over 18 months by July 2001.

I. CONTENT OF THE PROJECT

4. The OHCHR/UNDP technical cooperation programme comprises five major parts, two of which concern human rights in particular. The first of these is aimed at strengthening the operational capacities of Chad's National Commission on Human Rights, particularly in the following areas: (a) reporting under major international human rights instruments to which Chad is a party; (b) preparing a national plan of action for human rights; and (c) supporting non-governmental organizations (NGOs), especially those involved in human rights training, visits to prisons and the promotion and protection of the rights of women and children. The second concerns support for the recently established Conseil constitutionnel and Supreme Court. The Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation has approved funding worth US\$ 158,200 for the year 2000.

II. PROJECT STRATEGIES AND IMPLEMENTING ARRANGEMENTS

5. The aim of the project is to support the Government and people of Chad in their efforts to promote a human rights culture by helping the National Commission on Human Rights and high judicial bodies to develop the capacities required for the effective performance of their duties. Within that framework, the project is aimed at strengthening the operational capacities of the Commission, by focusing on the development of internal skills in the following three priority fields: human rights education; follow-up to the Government's fulfilment of commitments undertaken under major international human rights instruments; and reception, investigation and mediation procedures for consideration of complaints of human rights violations. The project also aims to provide high judicial bodies with the working tools required for supplying appropriate information to judges and other court officials, in the areas of both human rights and comparative law, with a view eventually to developing a consistent body of case law protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms.

6. For the purposes of implementation, external assistance will be called upon only for activities for which no domestic skills or experience are available; all promotion activities will be conducted in the field in order to ensure maximum impact on the public in the formulation, implementation and evaluation stages of training programmes. Support will also be provided to develop relations between the National Commission and international and foreign organizations working in the field of human rights.

III. CONCLUSION

7. The project, which will be jointly funded and managed with UNDP, will be implemented in close consultation with the other United Nations organizations working in Chad, with bilateral and multilateral donors and with international and national human rights organizations. This type of cooperation has already been established, for instance, with the World Bank. In the end, whether the project is successful or not will depend on satisfactory coordination of the project's activities and on the continued support of the Government of Chad.
